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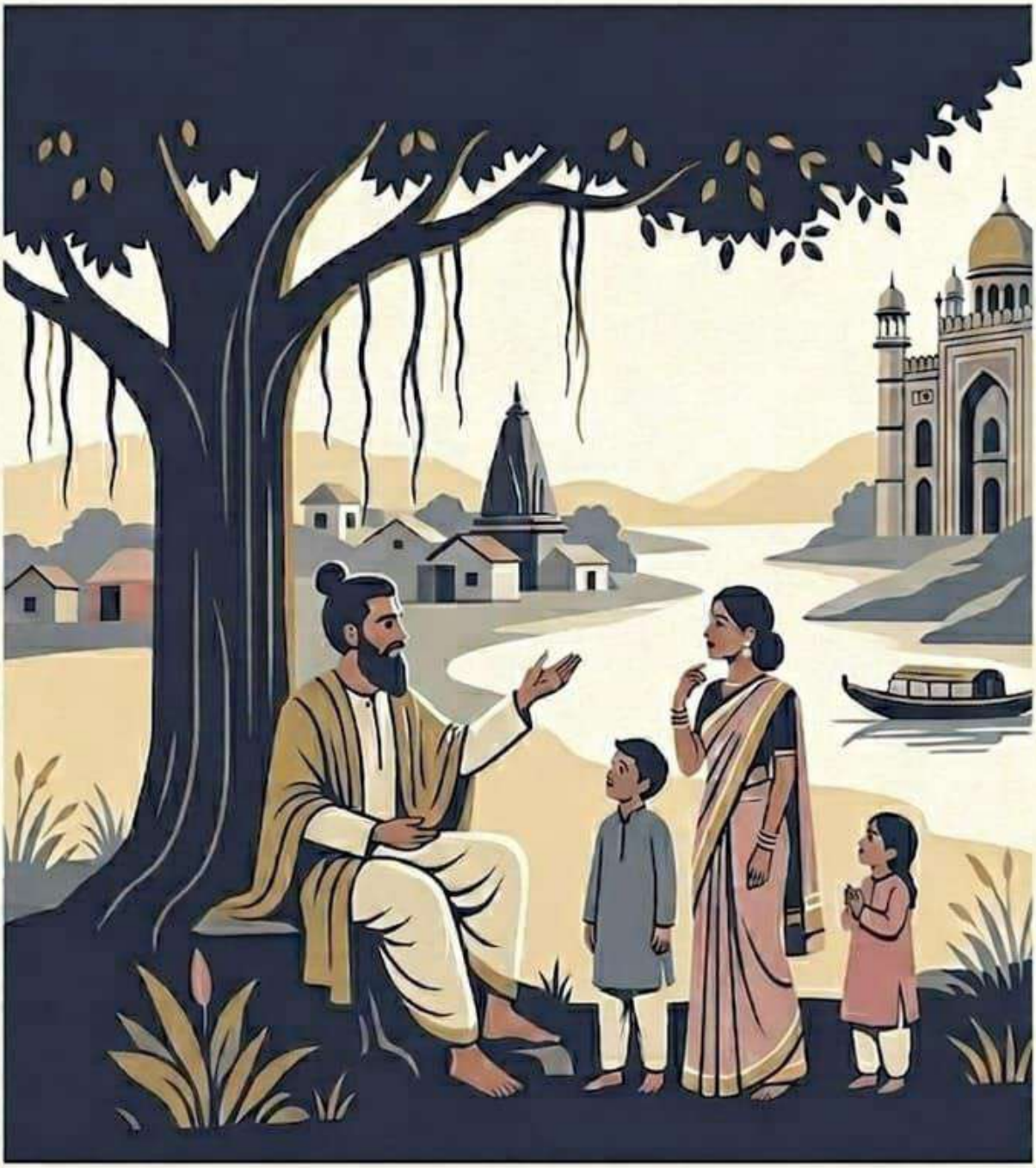
THE TALES OF AVSERI



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THE TALES OF AVSERI

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THE TALES OF AVSERI

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Preface

Avseri: The Conduit of Bundeli Folk Consciousness — Wit, Social Psychology, and Cultural Realism

Introduction

The historical and cultural landscape of Bundelkhand has not only been the cradle of valor and chivalry but has also served as an inexhaustible repository of oral literature, folklore, and extraordinary folk characters. Emerging from the soil of the historic village of 'Rasin' in the Chitrakoot district is one such timeless and deeply etched folk persona—'**Avseri**'.

The twelve narratives compiled in this book are not merely superficial anecdotes of rustic humor; rather, they serve as a vivid socio-historical documentation of the contemporary agrarian society, the paradoxes of human psychology, and the linguistic brilliance of Bundeli wit. Avseri embodies the pinnacle of *Pratyutpannamati* (presence of mind and spontaneous wit) and astute practical consciousness, utilizing his intellect to steer complex social anomalies toward immediate and clever resolutions.

Thematic Classification of the Narratives

1. Practical Intelligence and Tactful Negotiation

- **'The Offspring of the Utensils' & 'Neither Alum nor Myrrh' (*Na Heeng Lagi Na Fitkari*):** These narratives underscore Avseri's sharp practical intellect, where he counters societal greed, selfishness, and cunningness using the logic of the transgressors themselves. The absurd yet brilliantly sustained myth of "the birth and subsequent demise of a brass pot" beautifully conceptualizes the principle of "tit for tat" within the folk consciousness.
- **'The Mystery of the Earthen Pot':** This episode serves as a satirical commentary on the intersections of vanity and greed. By concealing dry soil beneath a deceptive, glistening layer of pure ghee, Avseri brilliantly exposes and penalizes the transactional greed of the courtesan without incurring any financial loss.

2. Folk Justice and Mass Psychology

- **'The Justice of the Batasa':** In order to deflate the ego of an arrogant traveler and teach him a lesson in local humility, Avseri leverages child psychology (using a simple sugar candy/Batasa) to confound an entire village panchayat. This story reinforces the idea that in traditional folk tribunals, justice was often delivered not through rigid legal metrics, but through acute psychological maneuverability.
- **'Everyone Has a Stomach':** When marginalized by an administrative oversight (the omission of his name from the wedding invitation list), Avseri deploys a

brilliant semantic trap to disrupt the wedding procession. By later resolving the crisis with the absolute, literal truth that "everyone has a stomach," he showcases an extraordinary monopoly over public discourse and crisis management.

3. The Tragic Subtext of Humor and Social Morality

- **'The Heavy Price of a Prank':** This narrative stands out as the most poignant and somber dimension of the entire compilation. It reveals the dark, catastrophic threshold of unregulated humor, where an unrefined and transgressive prank (the brother-sister bedroom deception) shatters familial sanctity, culminating in the tragic suicide of his wife. This tale illuminates the lesser-known, remorseful, and introspective depth of Avseri's otherwise lighthearted character.
- **'The Dawn Dialogue' & 'The Singular Bath':** These episodes capture the nuances of rustic modesty (*Lok-Laj*), the unwritten boundaries of gender communication in rural setups, and the immediate comedic friction generated when those boundaries are deliberately tested.

4. Spiritual Transcendence and Unwavering Faith

- **'The Victory of Faith':** This narrative dismantles the misconception that Avseri was merely a secular jester or a superficial trickster. His grueling pilgrimage to Kedarnath despite acute physical infirmity, followed by his unyielding *Hatha-Yoga*-like devotion that moves the deity to grant a divine dream-vision, restores a sublime, spiritual, and pious dignity to his character.
- **'The Camel on the Temple Roof' & 'The Well Message':** Whether deflating the professional vanity of an elite dancer by stranded her camel on a rooftop, or leaping into a well to deliver a collective, resounding response ("I bought it for 110 rupees!") to a repetitive and exhausting village query, these stories illustrate his unique mastery over the 'Art of Protest'.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the character of Avseri is a pristine mirror reflecting the Bundeli folk consciousness—a tapestry woven with threads of high intelligence, satire, rustic innocence, and sharp social awareness. This book is a humble yet vital academic endeavor to transcribe, preserve, and institutionalize these vanishing oral traditions, effectively elevating Avseri's status from a regional jester to a genuine folk hero on the literary stage.

"Buddhir Yasya Balam Tasya" — *He who possesses intellect, possesses true strength.* Avseri stands as the living embodiment of this ancient maxim.

- **Rajeev Agrawal**
- **Abhishek Ojha**

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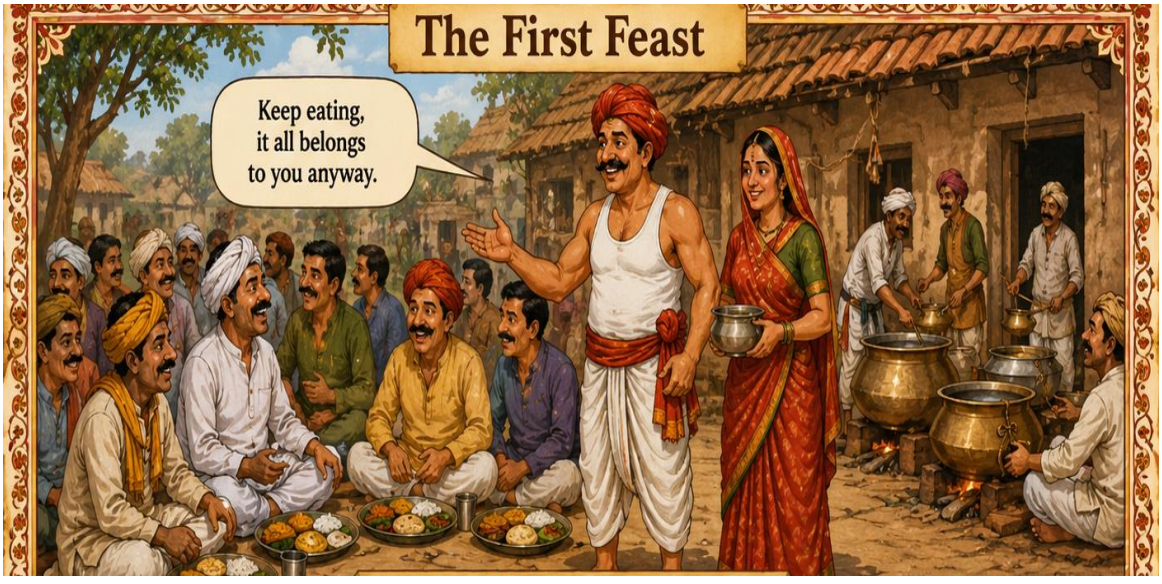
1. The Child of the Vessels

A long time ago, in the village of **Rasin** (Chitrakoot), there lived a man named **Avaseri** with his wife. They were a childless couple. Avaseri was a simple farmer who had a deep passion for wrestling (*pahalwani*). He was extremely cheerful and social by nature, which made him a favorite in the village. Whether the occasion was big or small, he was always invited, and he would always go out of his way to help with the work. In this way, the couple enjoyed many feasts at the invitations of their fellow villagers.

One day, the villagers said, "Brother Avaseri, you enjoy feasts everywhere, but you never host one yourself!" Initially, he tried to avoid it, but after constant teasing, he agreed, saying, "Fine, brothers, I will host a feast on such-and-such a day."

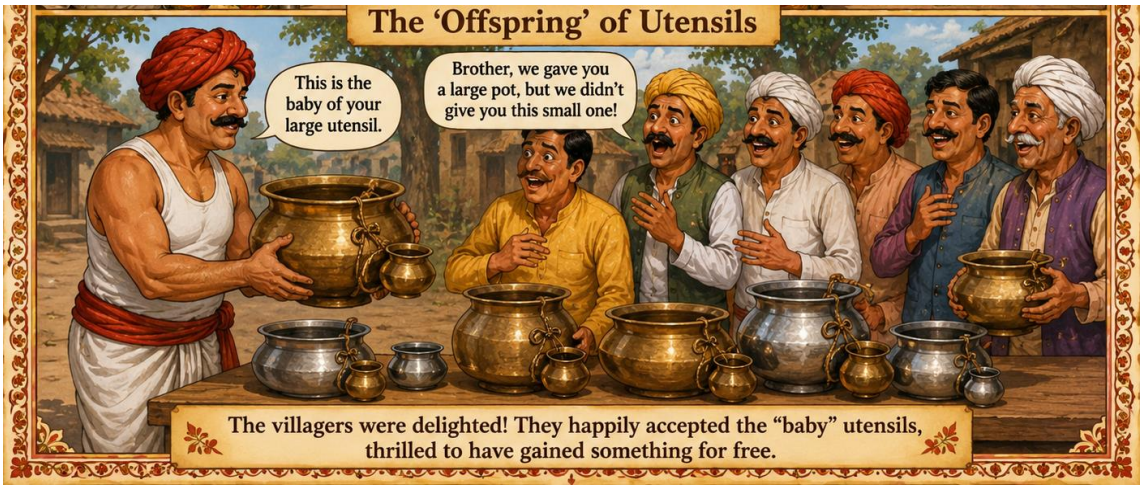


As per the village custom, whenever someone hosted an event, the entire village contributed by lending their supplies, utensils, and furniture. People brought everything to his house, helped cook, and had a grand time. The food was excellent. When the guests praised

him, Avaseri humbly said, **"Keep eating, it all belongs to you anyway."**

A few days later, when he went to return the utensils, he did something peculiar. Along with every large vessel he had borrowed, he attached a tiny little utensil. The villagers were astonished. They said, "Brother, we gave you a large pot, but we didn't give you this small one."

Avaseri replied calmly, **"This is the baby of your large utensil."**

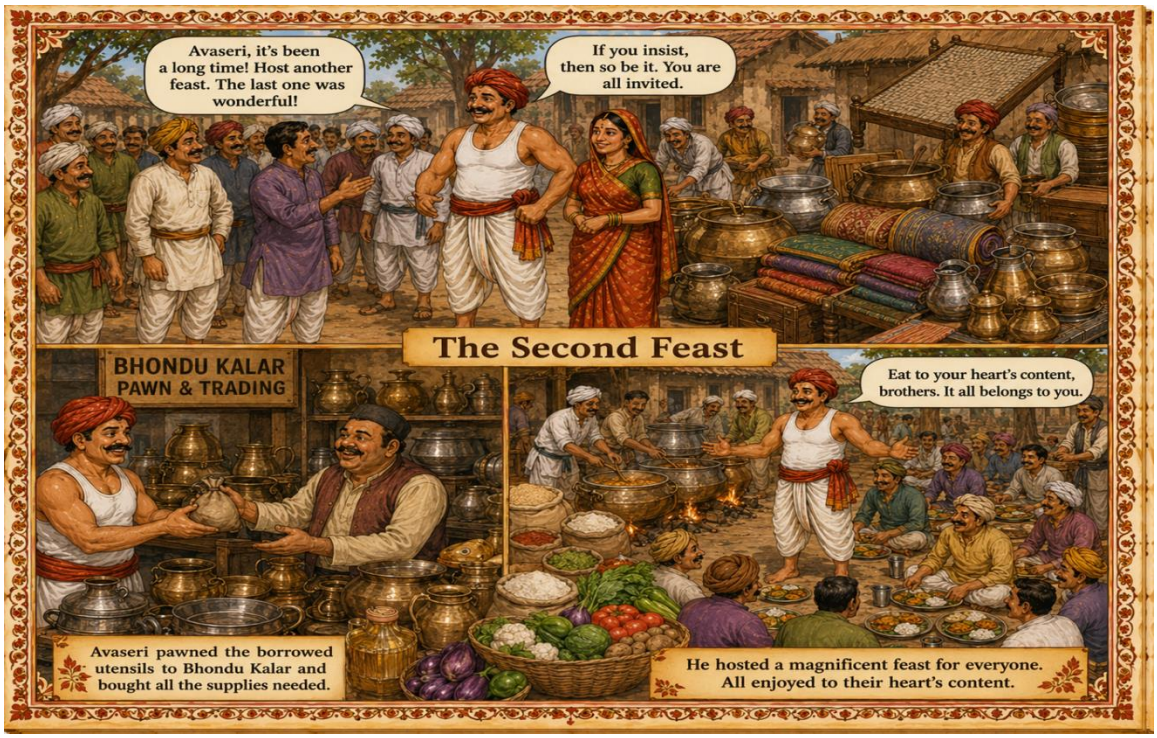


The villagers were delighted! They happily accepted the "baby" utensils, thrilled to have gained something for free.

A year or so passed, and the villagers, remembering the previous feast (and the free gifts), began pestering him again. "Avaseri, it's been a long time! Host another feast. The last one was wonderful!" Avaseri replied, "If you insist, then so be it. You are all invited."

This time, expecting more "babies," the villagers enthusiastically gave him even more supplies—beds, linens, large cauldrons, and expensive utensils. There was a local trader named **Bhondu Kalar** who dealt in

various goods. Avaseri took all the borrowed utensils, pawned them to Bhondu Kalar, and used the money to buy flour, vegetables, oil, ghee, and spices. He hosted a magnificent feast for everyone. Again, he said, **"Eat to your heart's content, brothers. It all belongs to you."**



Days turned into weeks, and weeks into months, but Avaseri did not return the utensils. Eventually, the villagers went to his house and demanded, "Brother, return our pots! Last time you gave us babies, but this time you haven't even returned the originals!"

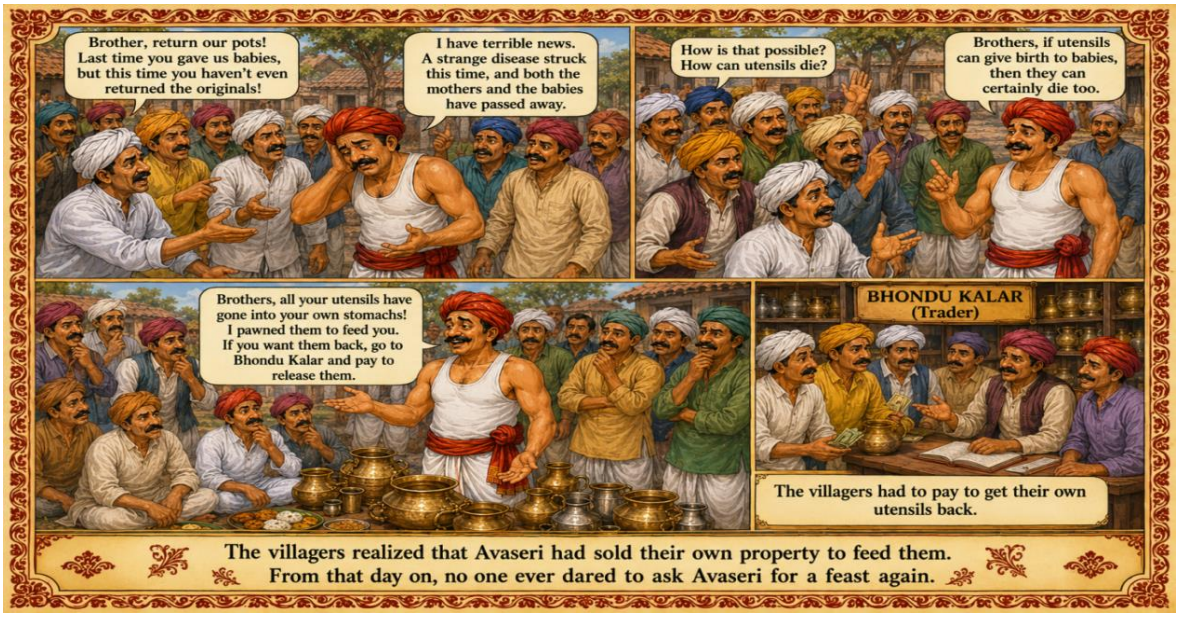
Avaseri put on a mournful face and said, **"I have terrible news. A strange disease struck this time, and both the mothers (large pots) and the babies (small pots) have passed away."**

The villagers were outraged. "How is that possible? How can utensils die?"

Avaseri replied logically, **"Brothers, if utensils can give birth to babies, then they can certainly die too."**

The villagers finally realized they had been tricked. When they begged him for their belongings, he told them the truth: **"Brothers, all your utensils have gone into your own stomachs! I pawned them to feed you. If you want them back, go to Bhondu Kalar and pay to release them."**

The villagers realized that Avaseri had sold their own property to feed them. They had to pay to get their own utensils back, and from that day on, no one ever dared to ask Avaseri for a feast again.



2. The Justice of the Sugar-Drop

In the village of **Rasin** (Chitrakoot), there lived a man named **Avaseri**, a person of extraordinary talent, sharp wit, and a brilliant presence of mind. In those days, people kept horses as a primary means of transport; Avaseri owned a sturdy local mare named 'Gved.'

One morning, while Avaseri was outside the village cutting grass for his mare, a couple from outside the region passed by. The man walked ahead, followed by his wife, who carried a small child in her arms.

As they walked, the man remarked to his wife, *"Listen, everyone says the people of Rasin are great jokers and tricksters. But look at us—we are halfway through the village and not a single person has played a prank on us. It seems the rumors were false."*

Avaseri's sharp ears caught this conversation. He smiled to himself and thought, *"Is that so? Well then, let's see what I can do."*

He immediately stopped his work, rushed to the shop of **Bhondu Kalar**, bought a handful of *Batasas* (sweet sugar-drops), and began following the couple stealthily. The child was resting on the father's shoulder, facing backward. As they walked, Avaseri would quietly hand a sugar-drop to the child. The child would eat it, and Avaseri would offer another. By the time they had covered a distance of two miles, the child had grown quite fond of this mysterious "uncle" who kept feeding him sweets.

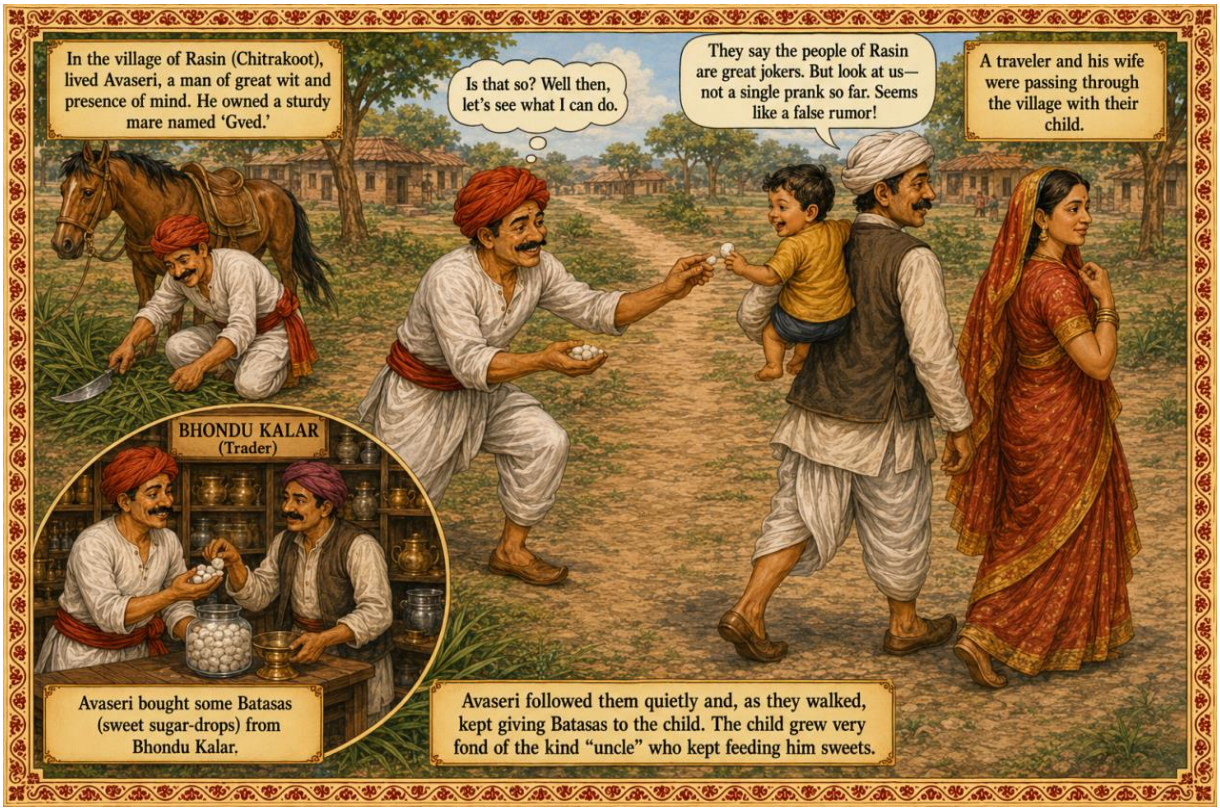
They eventually reached the center of a neighboring village called **Sudinpur**. Suddenly, Avaseri ran ahead and began wailing loudly, *"Help! Help, brothers! Look at this man—he is running away with my wife!"*

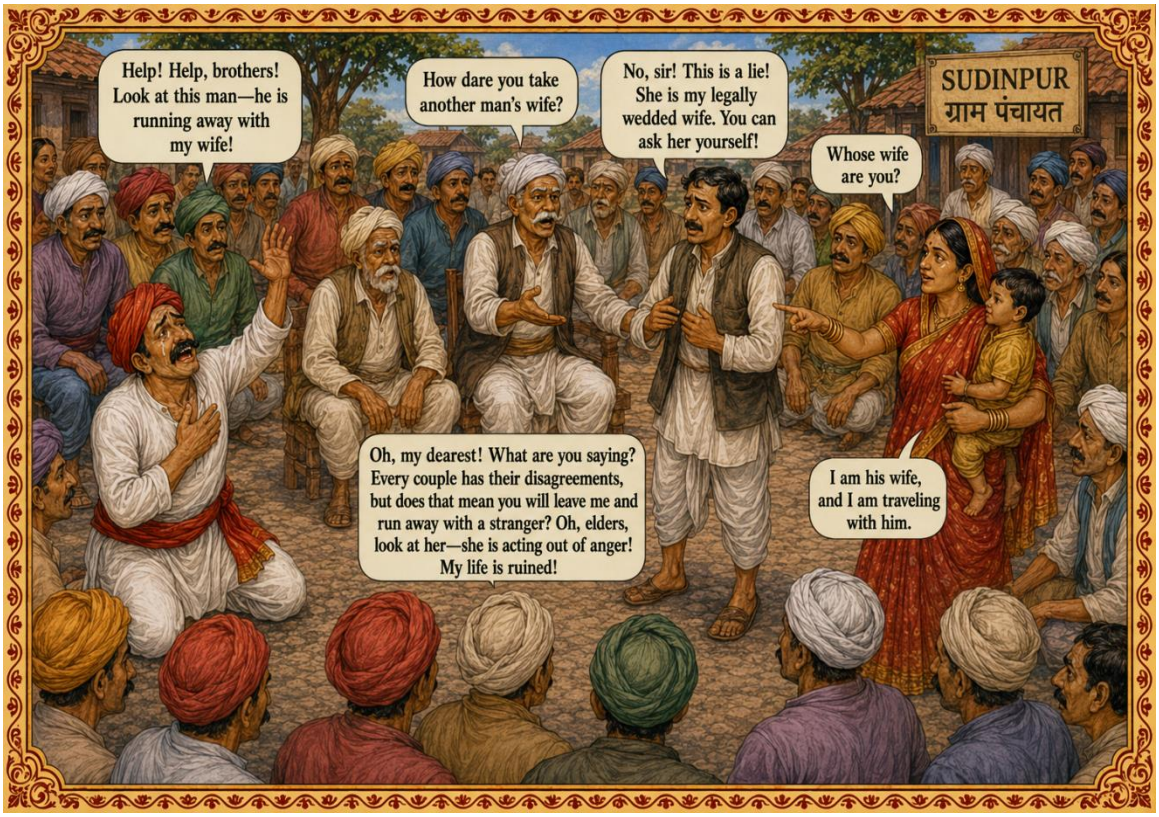
Hearing his cries, a massive crowd gathered. The villagers surrounded the couple, and soon, a formal village council (*Panchayat*) was convened. The elders asked the traveler, *"How dare you take another man's wife?"*

The man was terrified. *"No, sir! This is a lie! She is my legally wedded wife. You can ask her yourself!"*

The elders turned to the woman. *"Whose wife are you?"* she pointed to the traveler and said, *"I am his wife, and I am traveling with him."*

Avaseri immediately broke into a theatrical sob. *"Oh, my dearest! What are you saying? Every couple has their disagreements, but does that mean you will leave me and run away with a stranger? Oh, elders, look at her—she is acting out of anger! My life is ruined!"* He began to weep so convincingly that the elders were utterly confused.



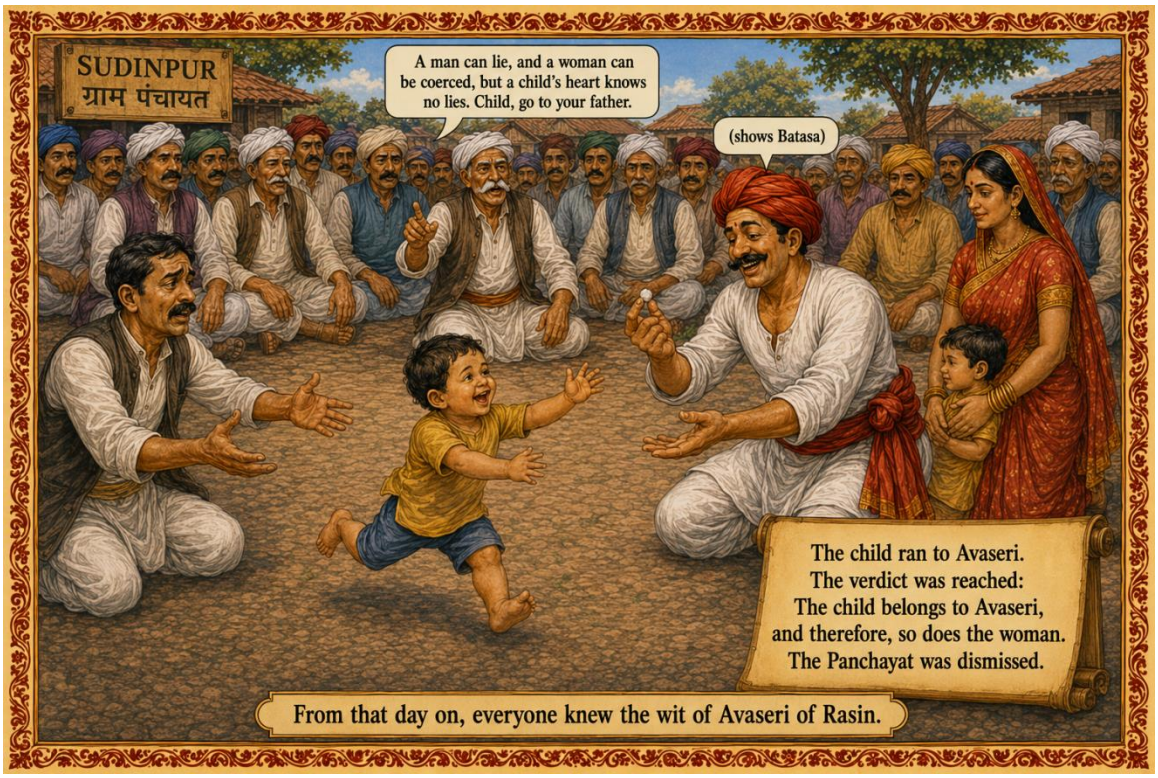


Unable to reach a conclusion based on the adults' testimony, the elders came up with a final test. *"A man can lie, and a woman can be coerced,"* they reasoned, *"but a child's heart knows no lies. We shall let the child decide who his father is."*

They sat the traveler on one side and Avaseri on the other. The child was placed in the middle. The elders commanded, *"Child, go to your father."*

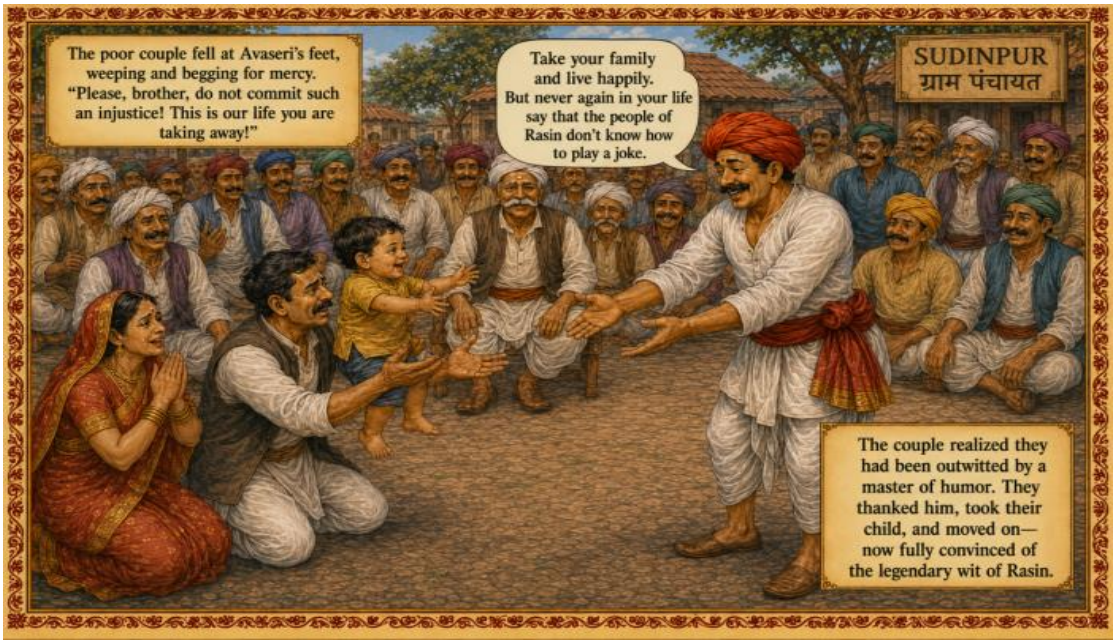
The traveler reached out his arms, pleading with his eyes. However, Avaseri subtly reached into his pocket and showed the child a *Batasa*. Recognizing the source of the sweets he had been enjoying for the last two miles, the child squealed with joy and ran straight into Avaseri's arms, hugging him tightly.

The verdict was reached: The child belongs to Avaseri, and therefore, so does the woman. The Panchayat was dismissed.



The poor couple fell at Avaseri's feet, weeping and begging for mercy. *"Please, brother, do not commit such an injustice! This is our life you are taking away!"* Avaseri stopped his act, smiled warmly, and handed the child back to them. He looked at the man and said:

"Take your family and live happily. But never again in your life say that the people of Rasin don't know how to play a joke."



The couple realized they had been outwitted by a master of humor. They thanked him, took their child, and moved on—now fully convinced of the legendary wit of Rasin.

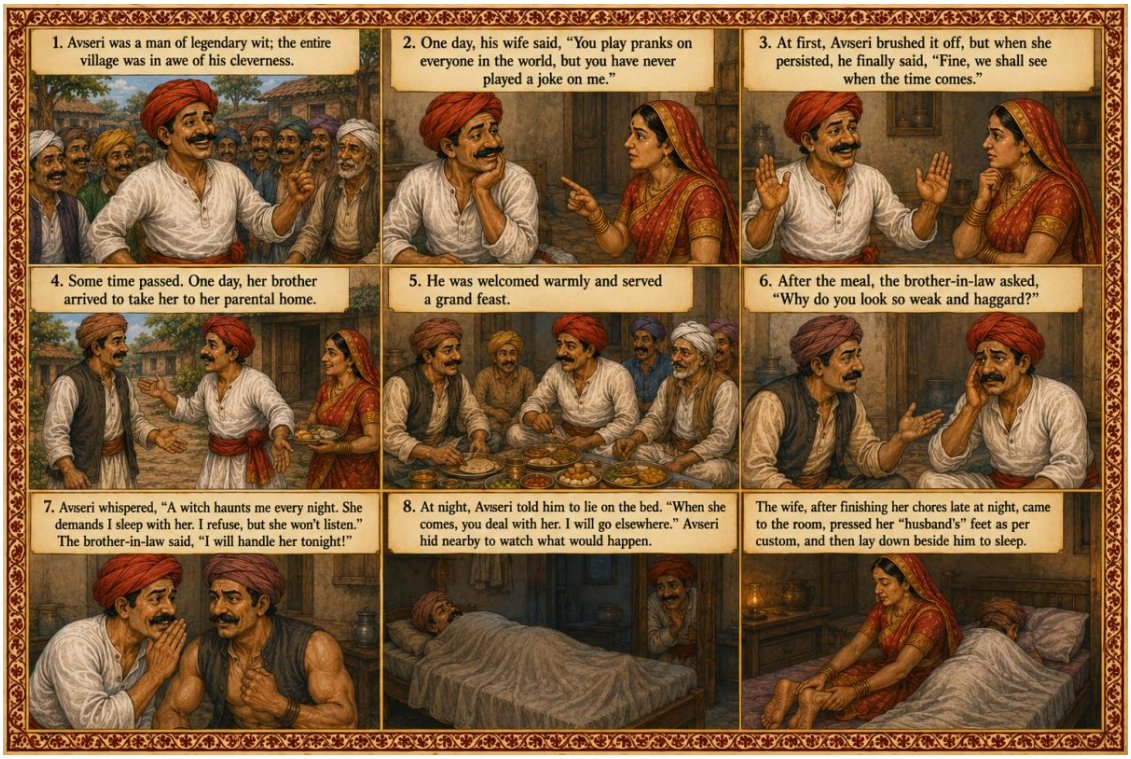
3. The Heavy Price of a Prank

Avseri was a man of legendary wit; the entire village was in awe of his cleverness. His popularity extended far beyond the borders of Rasin. One day, his wife said to him, "You play pranks on everyone in the world, but you have never played a joke on me." At first, Avaseri brushed it off, but when she persisted and insisted several times, he finally said, "Fine, we shall see when the time comes."

Some time passed, and the wife eventually forgot about her request. One day, her brother (Avaseri's brother-in-law) arrived at their home to take his sister back to her parental home for a visit. As is the tradition, he was welcomed with great warmth and served a grand feast.

While they were relaxing after the meal, the brother-in-law noticed Avaseri looking a bit lean and asked, "Brother-in-law, why do you look so weak and haggard these days?"

Avaseri leaned in and whispered a lie, "There is a witch who haunts me every night. She demands that I sleep with her. I refuse her



constantly, but she won't listen."

The brother-in-law, a proud man who dabbled in wrestling, stood up and said, "If that's the case, I will handle her tonight. What is the use of my strength if I cannot protect you?"

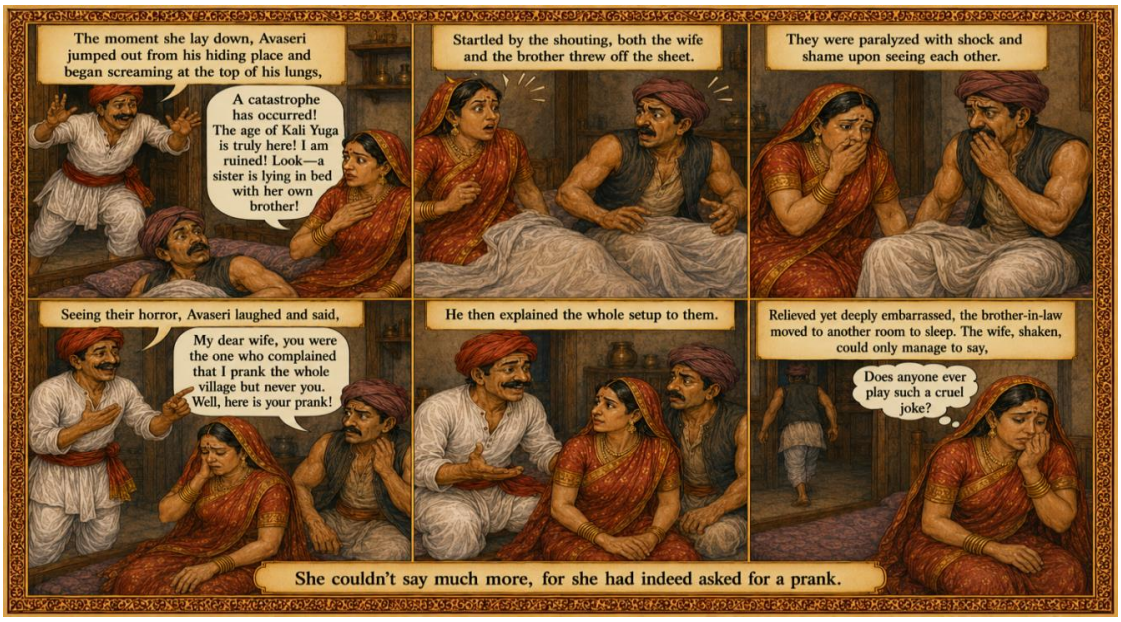
When night fell, Avaseri told his brother-in-law to lie down on his bed. "You sleep here," Avaseri instructed. "When she arrives late at night, you can deal with her. I shall go elsewhere." After the brother-in-law covered himself with a sheet and fell asleep, Avaseri quietly hid nearby to watch the drama unfold.

As per the rural custom, the wife finished feeding everyone, cleaned the hearth and the utensils, and completed her chores late into the night. Exhausted and eager to leave for her parental home early the next morning, she finally headed to the bedroom. By then, her brother was fast asleep in Avaseri's place, completely covered by the bedsheet.

Following the cultural tradition of a devoted wife, she began pressing her "husband's" feet as he slept. After a few minutes of service, she lay down on the bed beside him to sleep.

The moment she lay down, Avaseri jumped out from his hiding place and began screaming at the top of his lungs, "A catastrophe has occurred! The age of *Kali Yuga* is truly here! I am ruined! Look—a sister is lying in bed with her own brother!"

Startled by the shouting, both the wife and the brother threw off the sheet. They were paralyzed with shock and shame upon seeing each other.



Seeing their horror, Avaseri laughed and said, "My dear wife, you were the one who complained that I prank the whole village but never you. Well, here is your prank!"

He then explained the whole setup to them. Relieved yet deeply embarrassed, the brother-in-law moved to another room to sleep. The wife, shaken, could only manage to say, "Does anyone ever play such a cruel joke?" She couldn't say much more, for she had indeed asked for a prank.

Though it was meant as a joke, the weight of the social taboo and the embarrassment was too much for her to bear. She could no longer meet the eyes of her brother, her husband, or even herself. The shame gnawed at her soul, and her conscience was shattered. Unable to live with the memory of that moment, she waited for an opportunity, went out to the well behind the house, and jumped in, ending her life. **Avaseri's wit, which had always brought laughter, ultimately led to a tragedy he could never take back.**

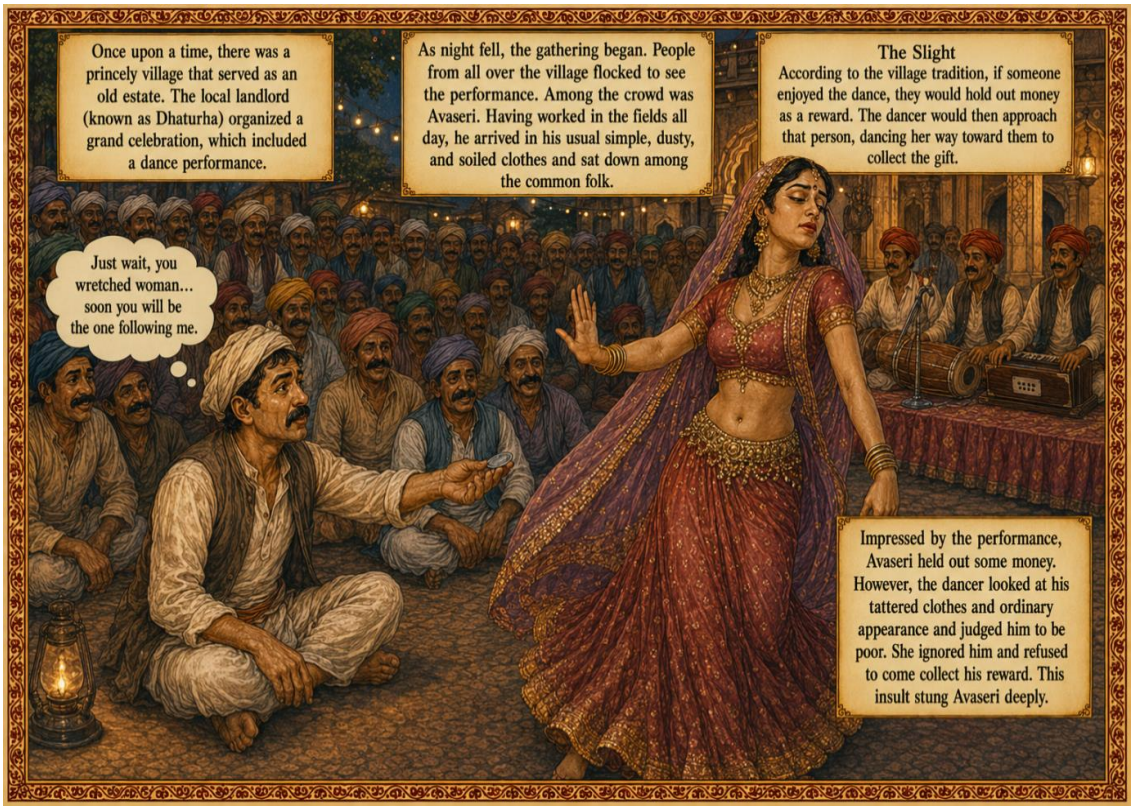
4. The Camel on the Temple Roof

Once upon a time, there was a princely village that served as an old estate. The local landlord (known as *Dhaturha*) organized a grand celebration, which included a dance performance. Famous dancers were invited from a nearby small hamlet called Faizabadpur.

As night fell, the gathering began. People from all over the village flocked to see the performance. Among the crowd was **Avaseri**. Having worked in the fields all day, he arrived in his usual simple, dusty, and soiled clothes and sat down among the common folk.

According to the village tradition, if someone enjoyed the dance, they would hold out money as a reward. The dancer would then approach that person, dancing her way toward them to collect the gift.

Impressed by the performance, Avaseri held out some money. However, the dancer looked at his tattered clothes and ordinary appearance and judged him to be poor. She ignored him and refused to come collect his reward. This insult stung Avaseri deeply. He

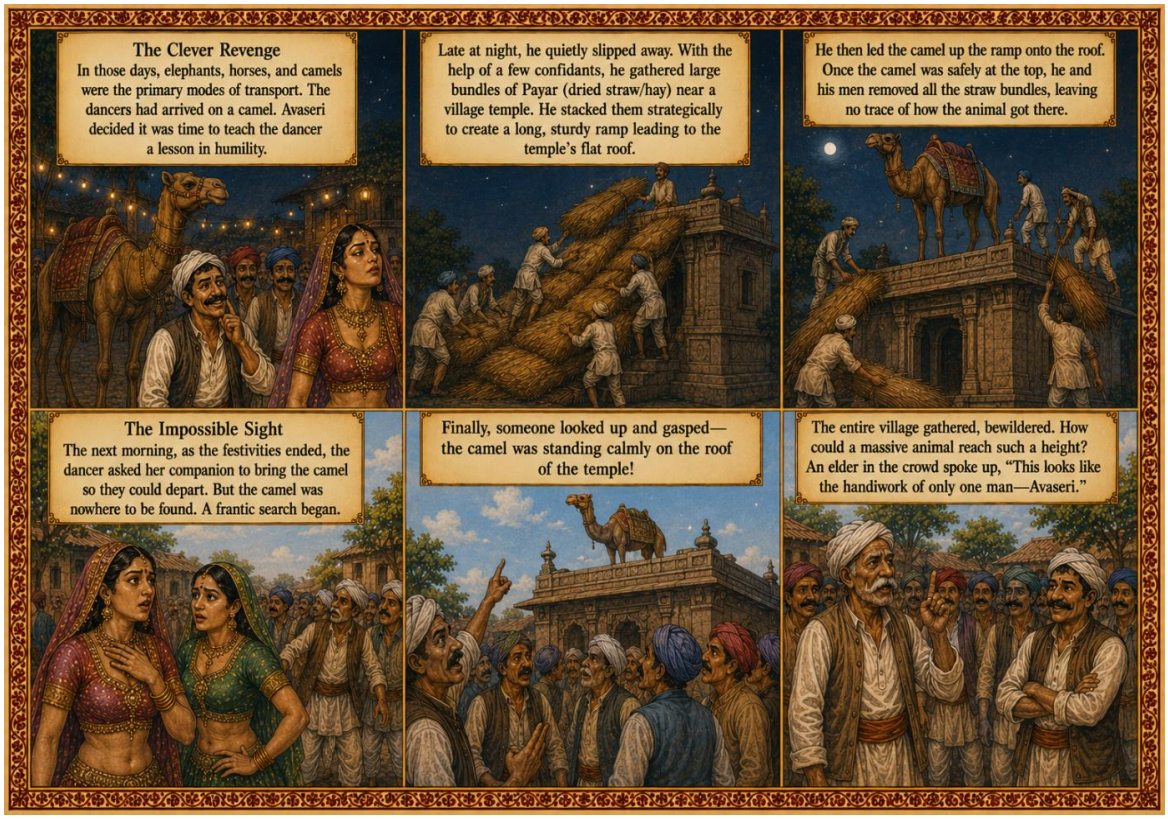


muttered to himself, *"Just wait, you wretched woman... soon you will be the one following me."*

In those days, elephants, horses, and camels were the primary modes of transport. The dancers had arrived on a camel. Avaseri decided it was time to teach the dancer a lesson in humility.

Late at night, he quietly slipped away. With the help of a few confidants, he gathered large bundles of *Payar* (dried straw/hay) near a village temple. He stacked them strategically to create a long, sturdy ramp leading to the temple's flat roof. He then led the camel up the ramp onto the roof. Once the camel was safely at the top, he and his men removed all the straw bundles, leaving no trace of how the animal got there.

The next morning, as the festivities ended, the dancer asked her companion to bring the camel so they could depart. But the camel was nowhere to be found. A frantic search began. Finally, someone

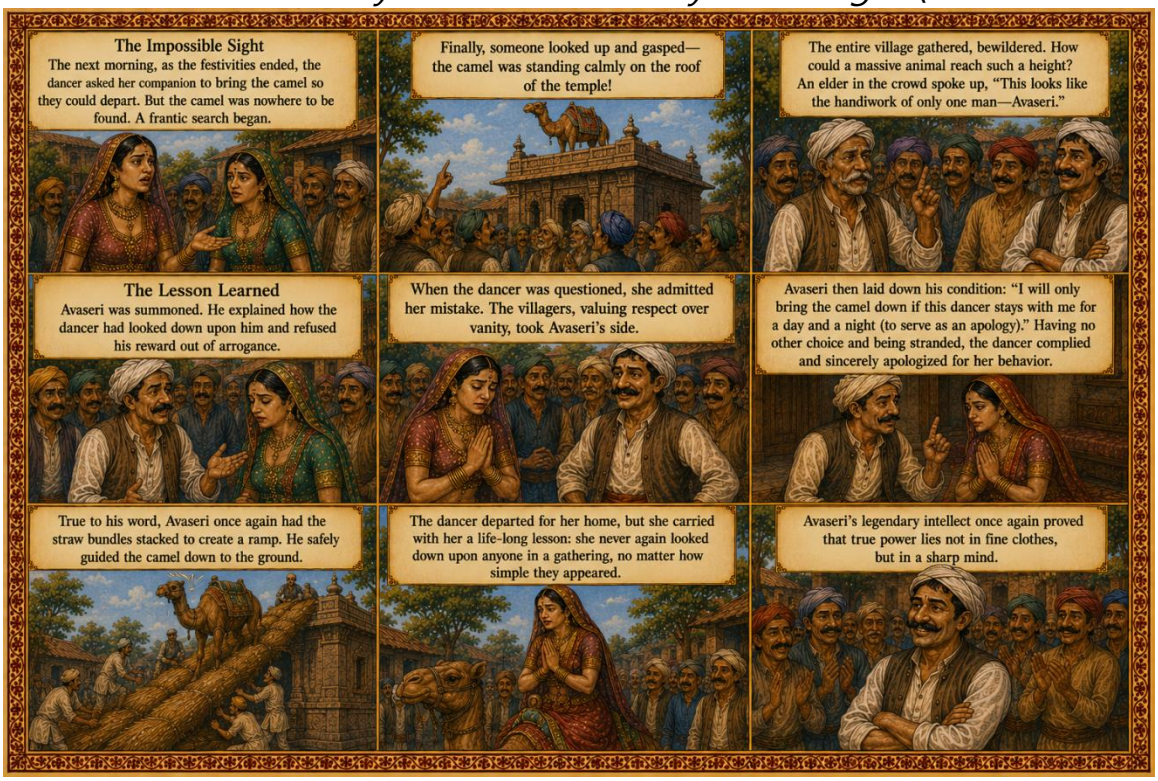


looked up and gasped—the camel was standing calmly on the roof of the temple!

The entire village gathered, bewildered. How could a massive animal reach such a height? An elder in the crowd spoke up, *"This looks like the handiwork of only one man—Avaseri."*

Avaseri was summoned. He explained how the dancer had looked down upon him and refused his reward out of arrogance. When the dancer was questioned, she admitted her mistake. The villagers, valuing respect over vanity, took Avaseri's side.

Avaseri then laid down his condition: *"I will only bring the camel down if this dancer stays with me for a day and a night (to serve as an*



apology)." Having no other choice and being stranded, the dancer complied and sincerely apologized for her behavior.

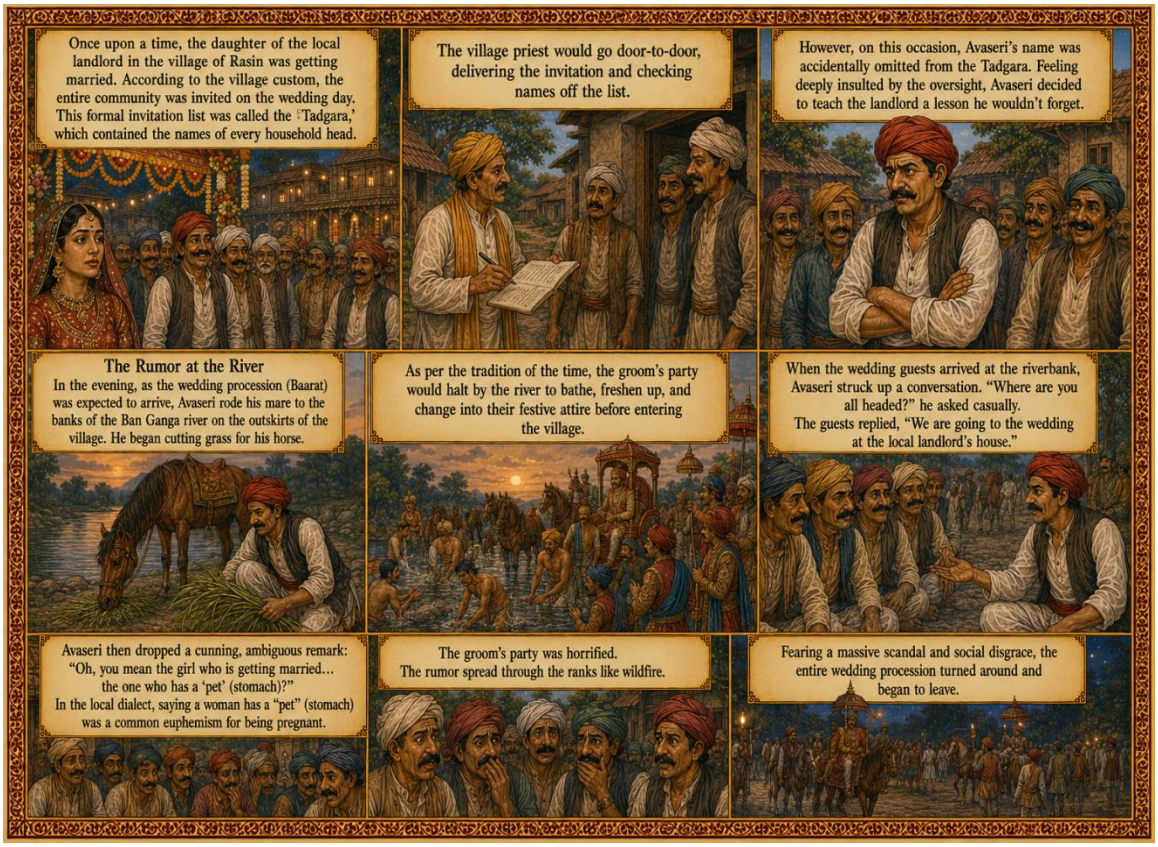
True to his word, Avaseri once again had the straw bundles stacked to create a ramp. He safely guided the camel down to the ground. The dancer departed for her home, but she carried with her a life-long lesson: she never again looked down upon anyone in a gathering, no matter how simple they appeared.

Avaseri's legendary intellect once again proved that true power lies not in fine clothes, but in a sharp mind.

5. Everyone Has a Stomach

Once upon a time, the daughter of the local landlord in the village of **Rasin** was getting married. According to the village custom, the entire community was invited on the wedding day. This formal invitation list was called the **'Tadgara,'** which contained the names of every household head. The village priest would go door-to-door, delivering the invitation and checking names off the list.

However, on this occasion, **Avaseri's** name was accidentally omitted from the *Tadgara*. Feeling deeply insulted by the oversight, Avaseri decided to teach the landlord a lesson he wouldn't forget.



In the evening, as the wedding procession (*Baarat*) was expected to arrive, Avaseri rode his mare to the banks of the Ban Ganga river on

the outskirts of the village. He began cutting grass for his horse. As per the tradition of the time, the groom's party would halt by the river to bathe, freshen up, and change into their festive attire before entering the village.

When the wedding guests arrived at the riverbank, Avaseri struck up a conversation. "Where are you all headed?" he asked casually.

The guests replied, "We are going to the wedding at the local landlord's house."

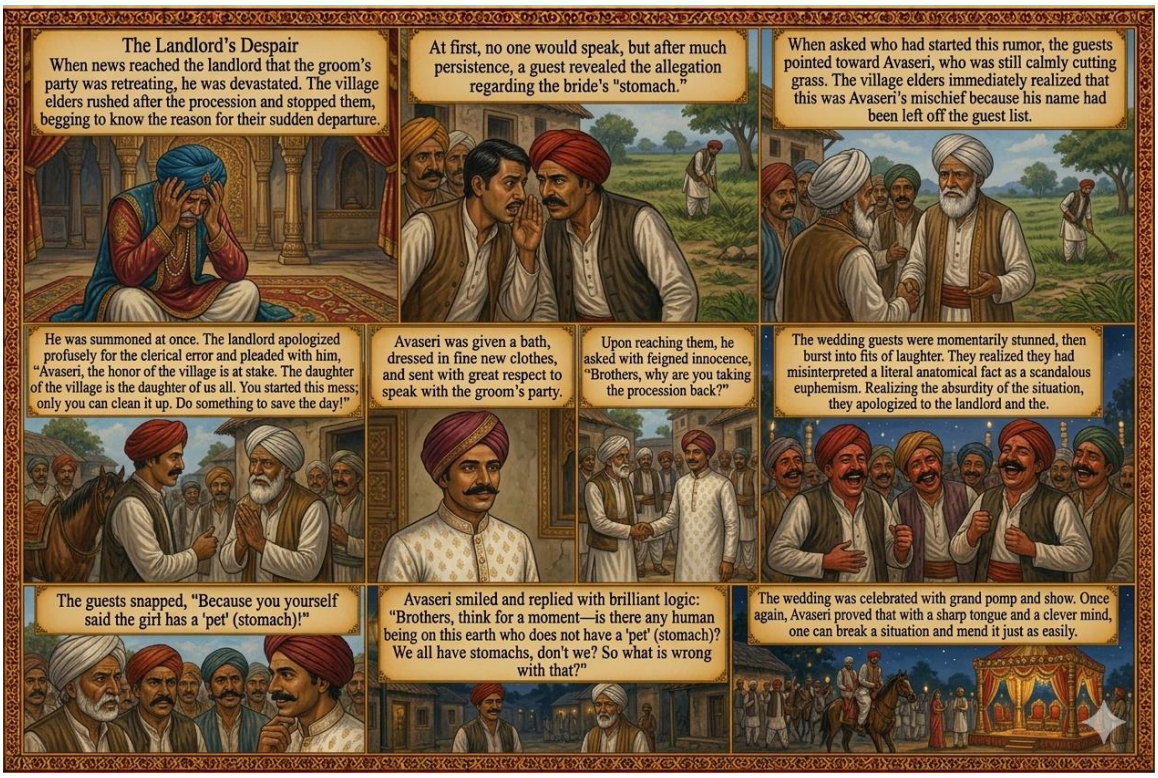
Avaseri then dropped a cunning, ambiguous remark: **"Oh, you mean the girl who is getting married... the one who has a 'pet' (stomach)?"**

In the local dialect, saying a woman has a "pet" (stomach) was a common euphemism for being pregnant. The groom's party was horrified. The rumor spread through the ranks like wildfire. Fearing a massive scandal and social disgrace, the entire wedding procession turned around and began to leave.

When news reached the landlord that the groom's party was retreating, he was devastated. The village elders rushed after the procession and stopped them, begging to know the reason for their sudden departure. At first, no one would speak, but after much persistence, a guest revealed the allegation regarding the bride's "stomach." When asked who had started this rumor, the guests pointed toward Avaseri, who was still calmly cutting grass. The village elders immediately realized that this was Avaseri's mischief because his name had been left off the guest list.

He was summoned at once. The landlord apologized profusely for the clerical error and pleaded with him, "Avaseri, the honor of the village is at stake.

The daughter of the village is the daughter of us all. You started this mess; only you can clean it up. Do something to save the day!"



Avaseri was given a bath, dressed in fine new clothes, and sent with great respect to speak with the groom's party. Upon reaching them, he asked with feigned innocence, "Brothers, why are you taking the procession back?"

The guests snapped, "Because you yourself said the girl has a 'pet' (stomach)!"

Avaseri smiled and replied with brilliant logic: **"Brothers, think for a moment—is there any human being on this earth who does not**

have a 'pet' (stomach)? We all have stomachs, don't we? So what is wrong with that?"

The wedding guests were momentarily stunned, then burst into fits of laughter. They realized they had misinterpreted a literal anatomical fact as a scandalous euphemism. Realizing the absurdity of the situation, they apologized to the landlord and the procession marched back to the village with great fanfare.

The wedding was celebrated with grand pomp and show. Once again, Avaseri proved that with a sharp tongue and a clever mind, one can break a situation and mend it just as easily.

6. The Victory of Faith

Once upon a time, a wave of spiritual fervor swept through the village of Rasin. People began to say, "Come, let us go on a pilgrimage!" Hearing this, **Avaseri**, despite being a poor man, felt a deep longing to visit the holy shrines. He set out on the long journey along with his fellow villagers.

The path was treacherous and full of hardships. They had only reached as far as the neighboring village of Rauli when Avaseri's health suddenly deteriorated. His companions became worried and said, "Brother Avaseri, we have only just begun our journey, and the destination is still very far. You are unwell. It is better that you return home. Once you are fully recovered, you can plan a pilgrimage some other time."

Avaseri replied firmly, "I have set out for the Lord, and I shall not turn back, even if my life leaves this body. Do this for me—carry me on a litter (*khatoli*). You will earn great merit. If you abandon a seeker, the Lord will surely be displeased."

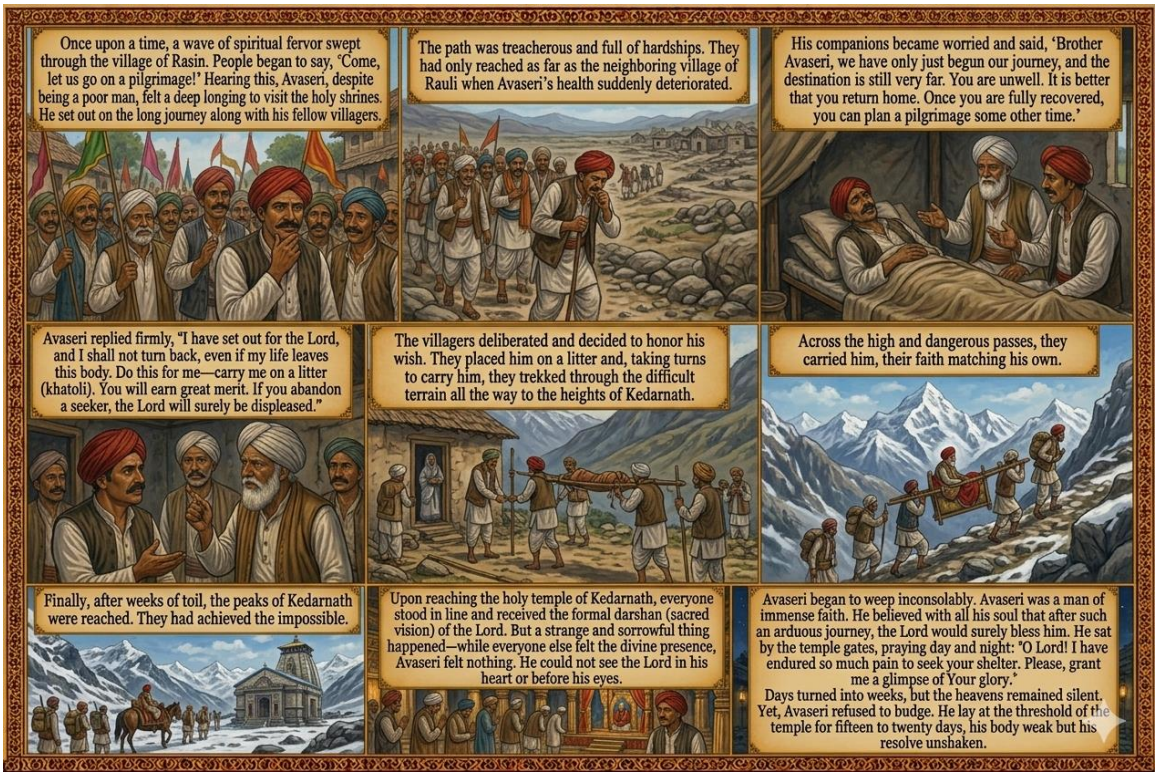
The villagers deliberated and decided to honor his wish. They placed him on a litter and, taking turns to carry him, they trekked through the difficult terrain all the way to the heights of **Kedarnath**.

Upon reaching the holy temple of Kedarnath, everyone stood in line and received the formal *darshan* (sacred vision) of the Lord. But a strange and sorrowful thing happened—while everyone else felt the divine presence, Avaseri felt nothing. He could not see the Lord in his heart or before his eyes. He began to weep inconsolably.

Avaseri was a man of immense faith. He believed with all his soul that after such an arduous journey, the Lord would surely bless him. He sat

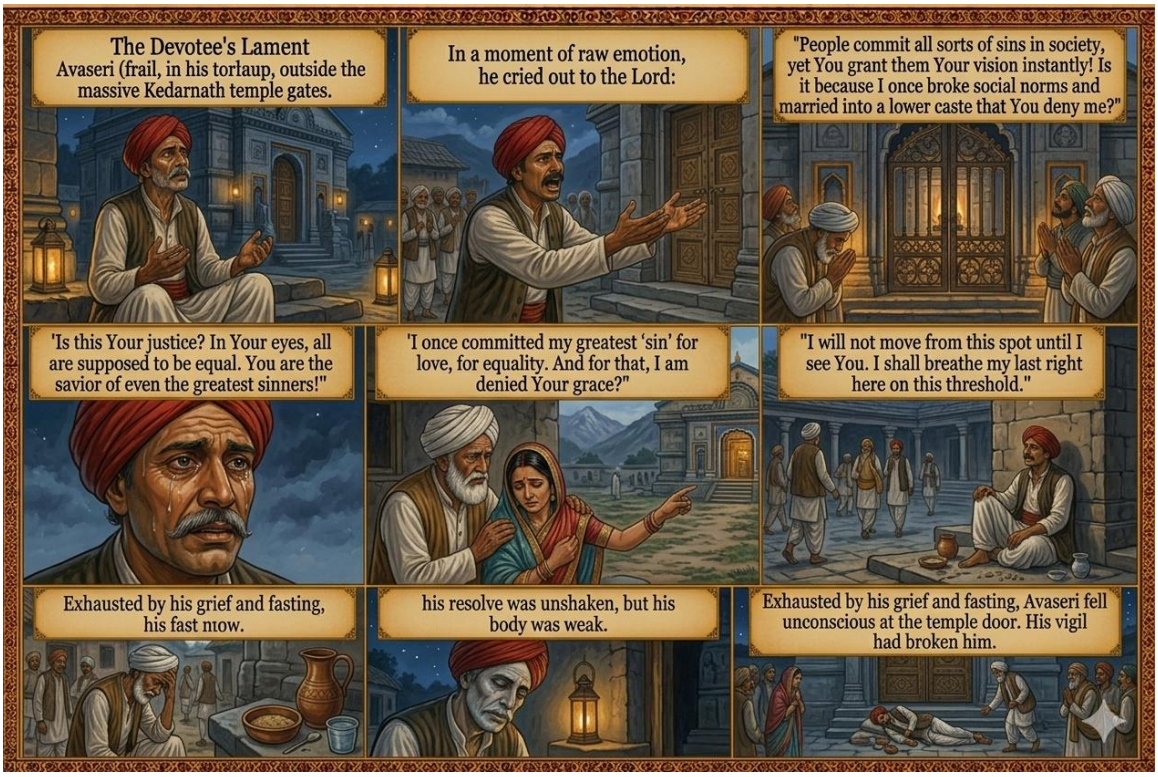
by the temple gates, praying day and night: "O Lord! I have endured so much pain to seek your shelter. Please, grant me a glimpse of Your glory."

Days turned into weeks, but the heavens remained silent. Yet, Avaseri refused to budge. He lay at the threshold of the temple for fifteen to twenty days, his body weak but his resolve unshaken.



In a moment of raw emotion, he cried out to the Lord: "People commit all sorts of sins in society, yet You grant them Your vision instantly! Is it because I once broke social norms and married into a lower caste that You deny me? Is this Your justice? In Your eyes, all are supposed to be equal. You are the savior of even the greatest sinners! I will not move from this spot until I see You. I shall breathe my last right here on this threshold."

Exhausted by his grief and fasting, Avaseri fell unconscious at the temple door.



That very night, the Lord appeared in the dream of the temple's chief priest. The Divine Voice said, "There is a poor devotee lying unconscious outside the threshold. Bring him inside. He is a true seeker, and his soul will not depart without my vision."

The priest immediately followed the divine command. Though the temple doors were already closed for the night, he went outside and found a frail, dusty man lying in a faint. The priest sprinkled holy water on his face. As Avaseri regained consciousness, the priest said, "You are truly blessed! The Lord has heard your cries. Prepare yourself for the vision."

The priest helped Avaseri bathe, gave him clean clothes, and led him into the sanctum sanctorum. There, in the silence of the night, Avaseri was granted a direct, miraculous vision of the Lord.

Upon witnessing the Divine, Avaseri was overwhelmed with bliss. All his fatigue, pain, and sorrow vanished in an instant. The villagers, too, were overjoyed; they felt that their labor of carrying him on the litter had finally been sanctified.

After some time, he was carried back to Rasin in the same litter. When they reached home, Avaseri shared his miraculous experience with the entire village. Everyone bowed in respect, saying, "Brother Avaseri, you are a true devotee. You have brought honor to our village. This proves that the Lord always reveals Himself to those who possess true devotion and unwavering patience."

Through this journey, Avaseri showed the world that while wit can win over men, only pure faith can move the Divine.

7. Neither Alum nor Asafoetida

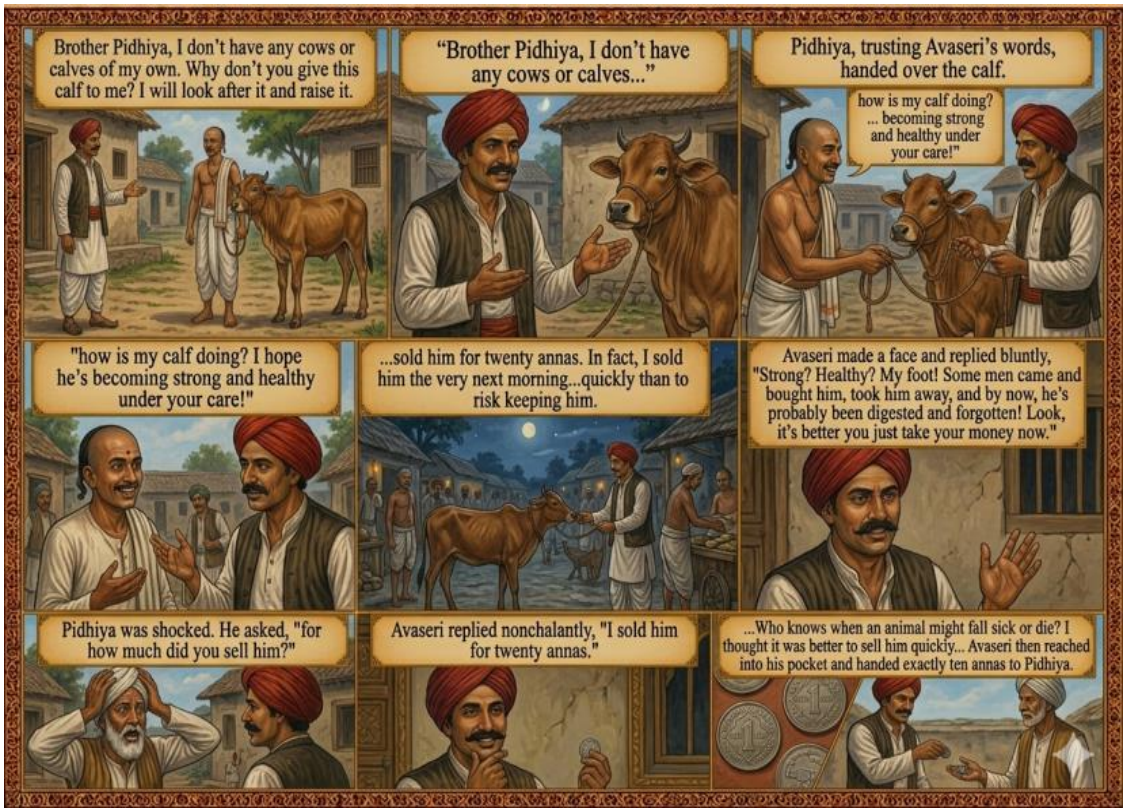
In a nearby village, there lived a Brahmin man known as Pidhiya. He owned a very fine, healthy young bull calf (*padwa*). Seeing the calf, Avaseri approached him with a clever proposition:

"Brother Pidhiya, I don't have any cows or calves of my own. Why don't you give this calf to me? I will look after it and raise it. When it grows and we find a buyer, I'll give you your fair share of the profit."

Pidhiya, trusting Avaseri's words, handed over the calf. However, Avaseri had no intention of raising it. The very next evening, he went to the market and sold the calf for twenty annas.

About fifteen to twenty days later, Pidhiya came to visit Avaseri. He asked eagerly, "So, Brother Avaseri, how is my calf doing? I hope he's becoming strong and healthy under your care!"

Avaseri made a face and replied bluntly, "Strong? Healthy? My foot!

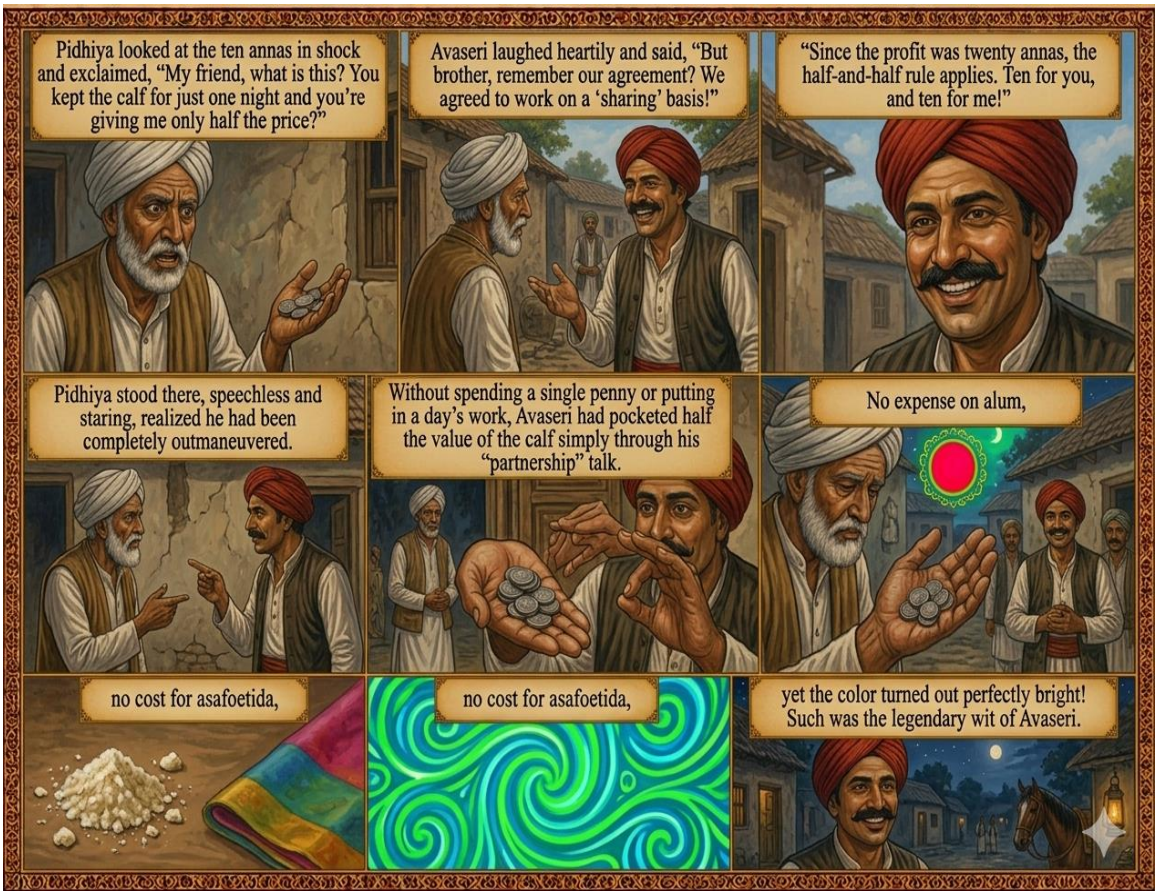


Some men came and bought him, took him away, and by now, he's probably been digested and forgotten! Look, it's better you just take your money now."

Confused, Pidhiya asked, "Wait, for how much did you sell him?"

Avaseri replied nonchalantly, "I sold him for twenty annas. In fact, I sold him the very next morning after I took him from you. Who knows when an animal might fall sick or die? I thought it was better to sell him quickly than to risk keeping him."

Avaseri then reached into his pocket and handed exactly **ten annas** to Pidhiya.



Pidhiya looked at the ten annas in shock and exclaimed, "My friend, what is this? You kept the calf for just one night and you're giving me only half the price?"

Avaseri laughed heartily and said, **"But brother, remember our agreement? We agreed to work on a 'sharing' basis! Since the profit was twenty annas, the half-and-half rule applies. Ten for you, and ten for me!"**

Pidhiya stood there, speechless and staring, realized he had been completely outmaneuvered. Without spending a single penny or putting in a day's work, Avaseri had pocketed half the value of the calf simply through his "partnership" talk.

As the saying goes in the village: *No expense on alum, no cost for asafoetida, yet the color turned out perfectly bright!* Such was the legendary wit of Avaseri.

8. Avaseri's Message from the Well

Once upon a time, Avaseri bought a bull from a nearby village and brought it home. The bull was exceptionally sturdy and handsome. As Avaseri led the animal through the village streets, every person he encountered would stop him and ask the same question:

"Brother, how much did you pay for this bull?"

Avaseri would patiently reply, *"Brother, I bought it for one hundred and ten rupees."*

A few steps later, another person would stop him. *"Avaseri, that's a fine bull! What was the price?"*

Again, he would answer, *"One hundred and ten rupees."*

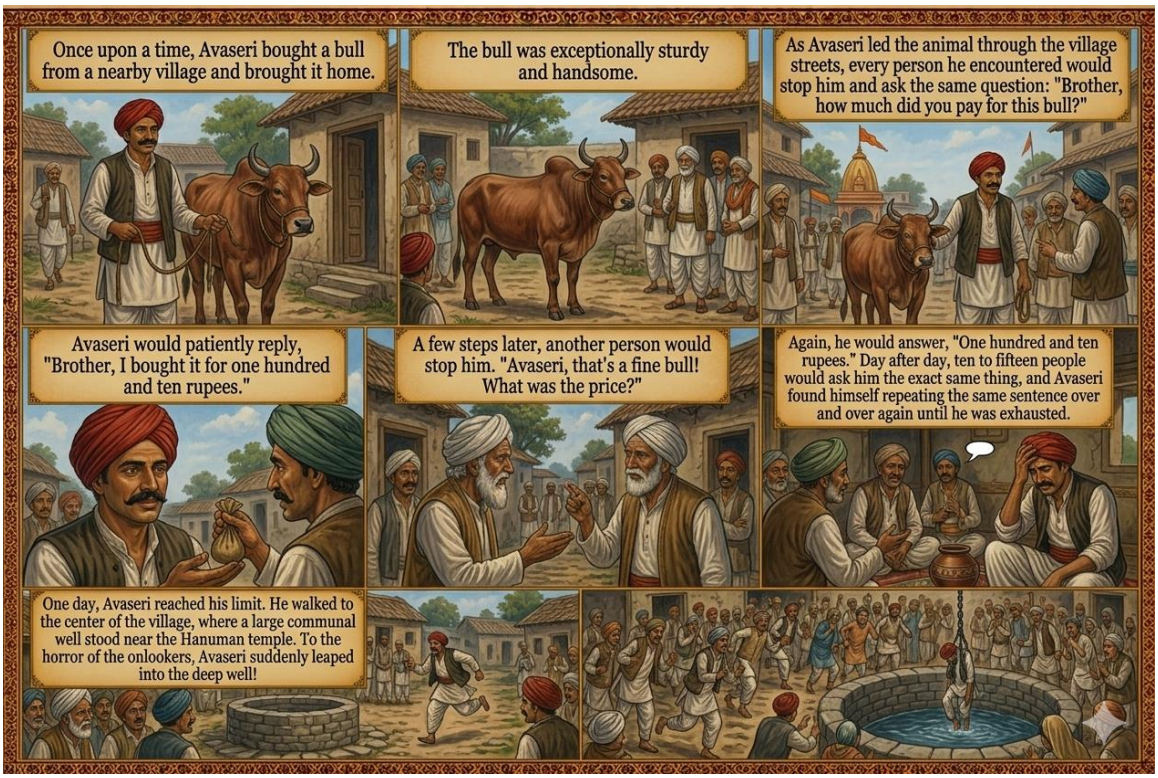
Day after day, ten to fifteen people would ask him the exact same thing, and Avaseri found himself repeating the same sentence over and over again until he was exhausted.

One day, Avaseri reached his limit. He walked to the center of the village, where a large communal well stood near the Hanuman temple. To the horror of the onlookers, Avaseri suddenly leaped into the deep well!

The news spread like wildfire: *"Avaseri has jumped into the well! Avaseri is gone!"*

The villagers came running from all directions, gathering around the mouth of the well. Some started mourning, saying, *"Oh, what a tragedy! Avaseri was such a wonderful and kind man. Why would he do this?"*

Inside the well, there was a thick iron chain hanging down. Avaseri hadn't actually drowned; he was firmly gripping the chain and dangling just above the water.



The villagers peered down into the darkness and shouted, *"Avaseri! Are you alright? Why did you jump? Are you alive?"*

From the depths of the well, Avaseri's voice echoed back, calm and loud: **"Yes, I am alive! Now, listen carefully, all of you!"**

The crowd fell silent, waiting for a profound final message or a reason for his despair.

Avaseri shouted, **"I bought the bull for one hundred and ten rupees! Every single day, you people ask me one by one, and I am**

tired of repeating it. So, I thought I'd jump in here to get you all in one place so I could tell everyone the price at once!"

The villagers, who had been on the verge of tears, burst into fits of laughter. They pulled him out, shaking their heads at his ridiculous yet effective way of delivering a "public announcement."

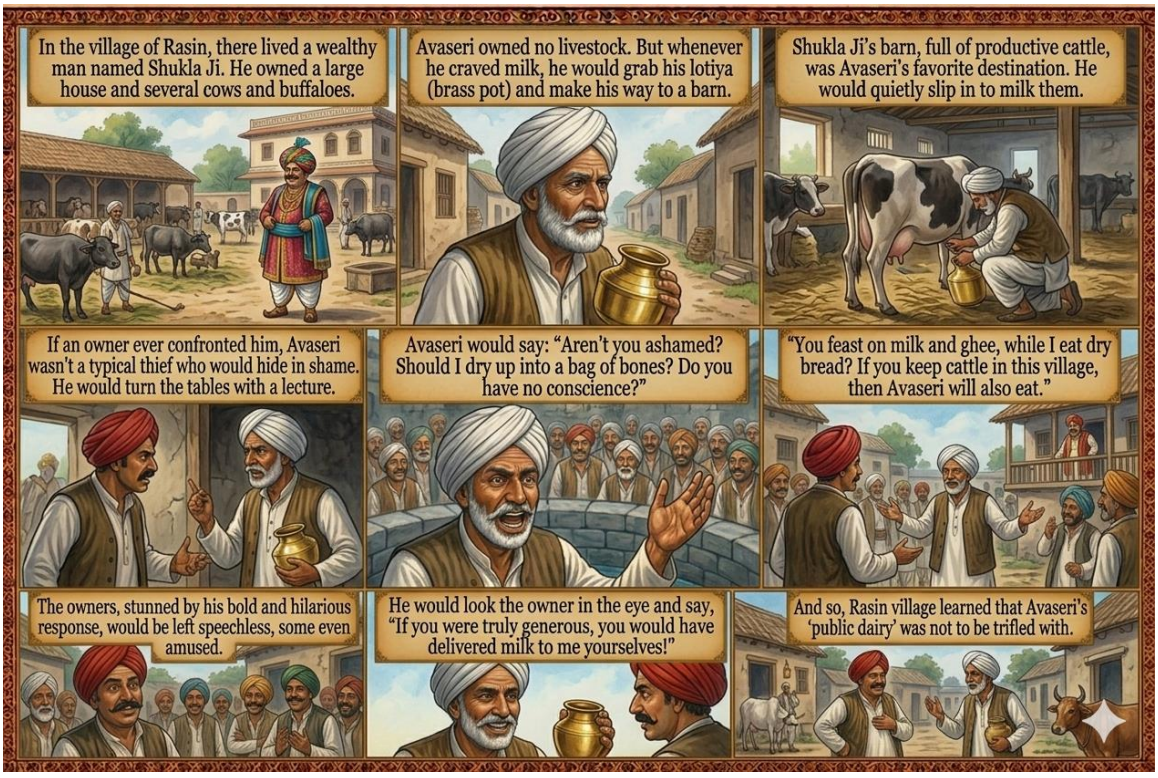
And that was Avaseri's famous **"Message from the Well."**

9. Stealing Silently, Eating Royally

In the village of Rasin, there lived a wealthy man named Shukla Ji. He owned a large house and several cows and buffaloes that produced plenty of milk. Whenever the opportunity arose, Avaseri would quietly slip into Shukla Ji's barn and milk the cattle for himself.

Since Avaseri owned no livestock of his own, he considered the entire village's cattle as his personal dairy. Whenever he craved milk or curd, he would simply grab a bucket or a small brass pot (*lotiya*) from his house, walk over to someone's barn, and milk whichever cow or buffalo he found.

Avaseri wasn't a typical thief who would hide in shame if caught. If an owner ever confronted him or told him to stop, Avaseri would turn the tables with a bold and hilarious lecture. He would say:



"Aren't you ashamed to speak to me like that? Look at me! Should I just dry up and turn into a bag of bones? Do you have no conscience?

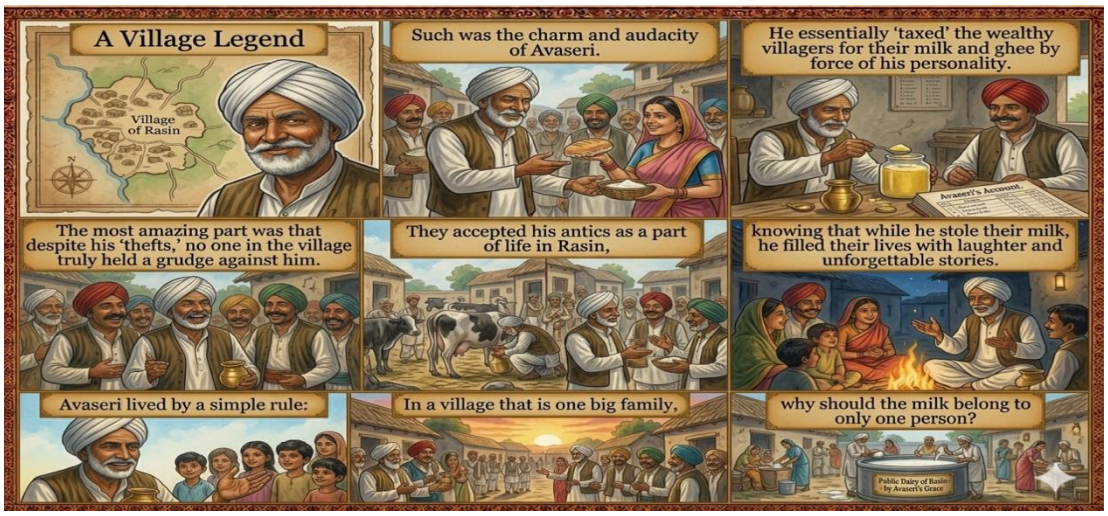
You and your family feast on milk and ghee every day, while I am expected to eat dry bread? That's not how it works! If you keep cattle in this village, then Avaseri will also eat."

He would look the owner in the eye and add, "If you people were truly generous, you would have delivered a liter of milk to my house yourselves. But since you didn't, I have to come and serve myself!"

Such was the charm and audacity of Avaseri. He essentially "taxed" the wealthy villagers for their milk and ghee by force of his personality.

The most amazing part was that despite his "thefts," no one in the village truly held a grudge against him. They accepted his antics as a part of life in Rasin, knowing that while he stole their milk, he filled their lives with laughter and unforgettable stories.

Avaseri lived by a simple rule: In a village that is one big family, why should the milk belong to only one person?



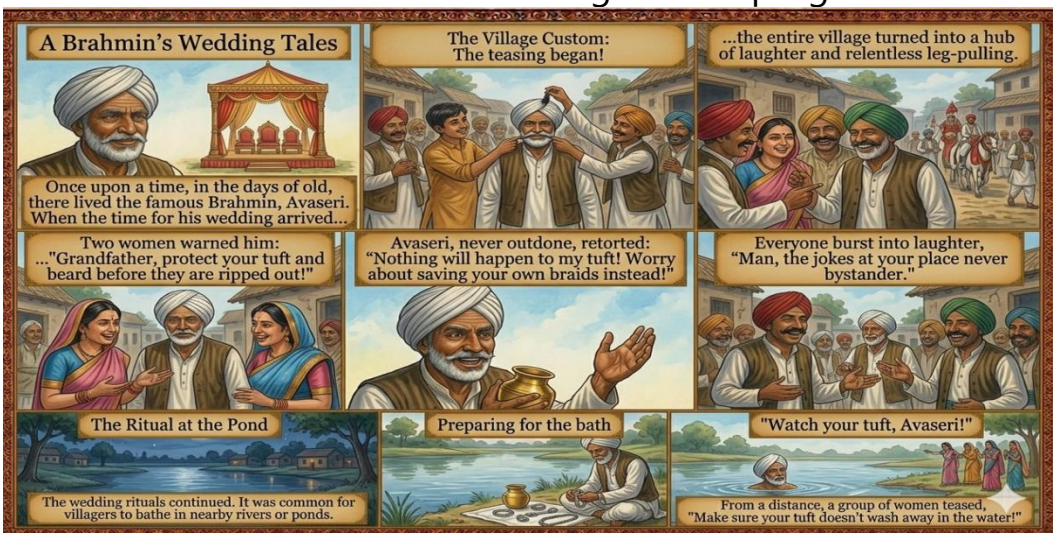
10. Avaseri's Wedding and the Unique Bath

Once upon a time, in the days of old, there lived the famous Brahmin, Avaseri. When the time for his wedding arrived, the entire village turned into a hub of laughter and relentless leg-pulling.

As per the village customs, everyone teased the groom. Someone would flick his *choti* (the traditional tuft of hair on a Brahmin's head), while another would playfuly tug at his beard. Seeing this, two village women laughed and said, "Grandfather, you better protect yourself! Otherwise, your tuft or your beard might get ripped out by these pranksters!"

Avaseri, never one to be outdone, laughed back and retorted, **"Nothing will happen to my tuft! You should worry about saving your own braids instead!"** Everyone burst into laughter, and a bystander remarked, "Man, the jokes at your place never end!"

The banter continued as the wedding rituals progressed. In those



times, it was common for villagers to go to nearby rivers or ponds for their daily bath. On his wedding day, Avaseri headed to the village

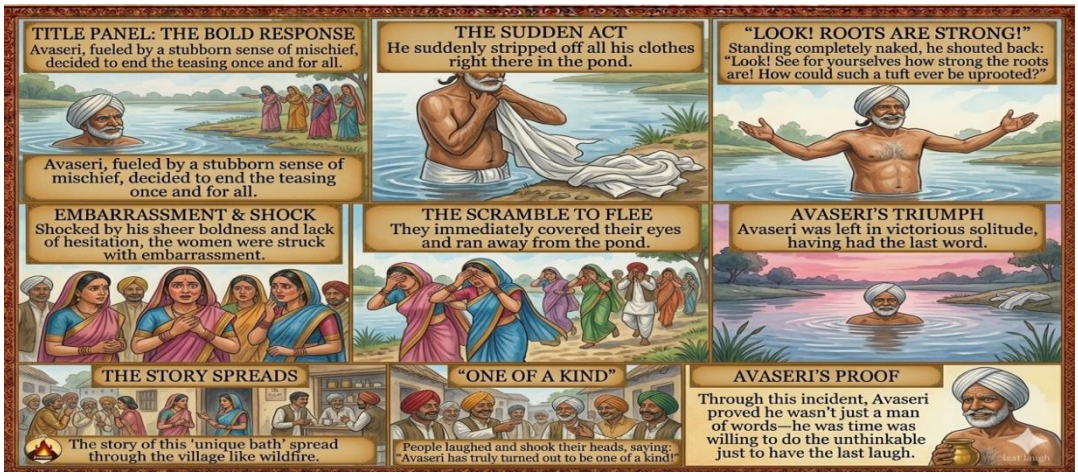
pond to bathe. He took off his heavy bangles (*karas*) and jewelry, placed them carefully on the bank, and jumped into the water.

A group of women nearby began teasing him again, shouting from a distance, "Watch your tuft, Avaseri! Make sure it doesn't wash away or get uprooted in the water!"

Avaseri, fueled by a stubborn sense of mischief, decided to end the teasing once and for all. He suddenly stripped off all his clothes right there in the pond. Standing completely naked, he shouted back, **"Look! See for yourselves how strong the roots are! How could such a tuft ever be uprooted?"**

Shocked by his sheer boldness and lack of hesitation, the women were struck with embarrassment. They immediately covered their eyes and ran away from the pond.

The story of this "unique bath" spread through the village like wildfire.

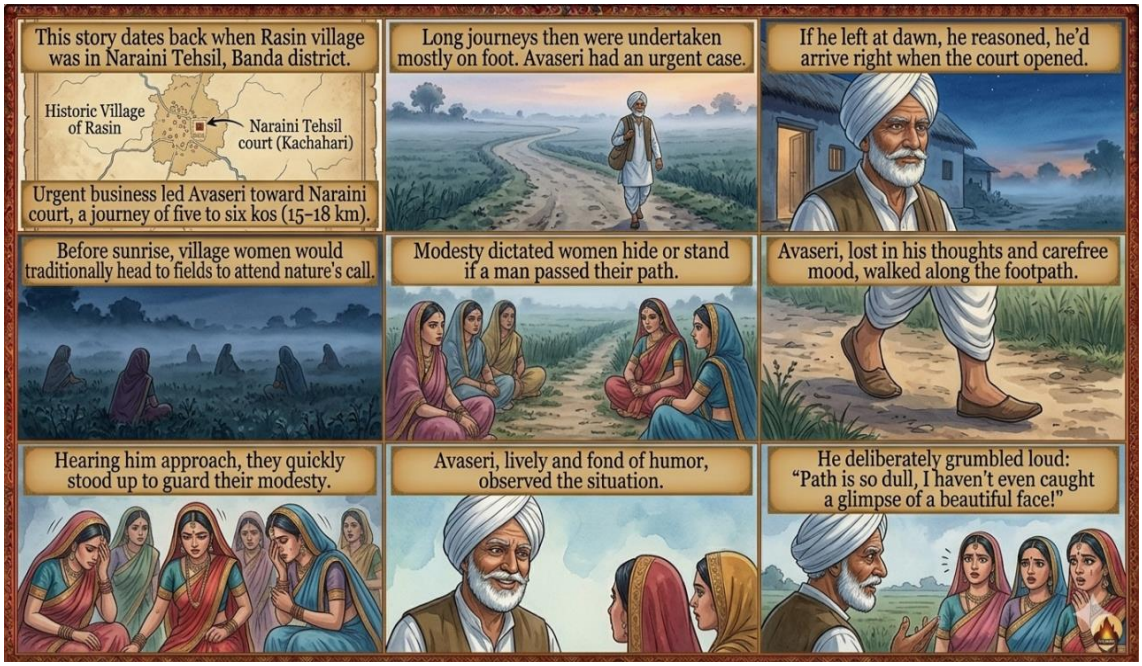


People laughed and shook their heads, saying, **"Avaseri has truly turned out to be one of a kind!" Through this incident, Avaseri proved that he wasn't just a man of words—he was willing to do the unthinkable just to have the last laugh.**

11. A Dialogue Between Dusk and Dawn

This story dates back to the era when the historic village of Rasin was a part of the Naraini Tehsil in the Banda district. In those days, modern means of transportation were not readily available, so long journeys usually had to be undertaken on foot. Once, Avaseri had some urgent business at the Naraini Tehsil court (*kachahari*). The distance from Rasin to Naraini was about five to six *kos* (approximately 15 to 18 kilometers). Avaseri reasoned that if he set out at the crack of dawn, he would reach the court right when it opened. With this intention, he left his house very early in the morning, while the dawn's mist still enveloped the surroundings.

During that period, rural households did not have indoor toilets. Consequently, out of traditional modesty and shyness, the village women would head toward the fields or the roadsides before sunrise, under the cover of dawn's darkness, to attend to nature's call. The unwritten rule of modesty dictated that if a man was seen passing along the path, the women would immediately try to hide or stand up out of sheer bashfulness.



Avaseri was moving along the footpath, lost in his own thoughts and carefree mood. On both sides of the path, a few women were seated. Hearing the approach of a man from a distance, they quickly began to stand up to guard their modesty. Avaseri, by nature lively and excessively fond of humor, observed the situation. He deliberately grumbled out loud:

"What terrible luck! I am walking so far on this freezing morning, yet the path is so desolate and dull that I haven't even caught a glimpse of something auspicious or a beautiful face early in the morning!"

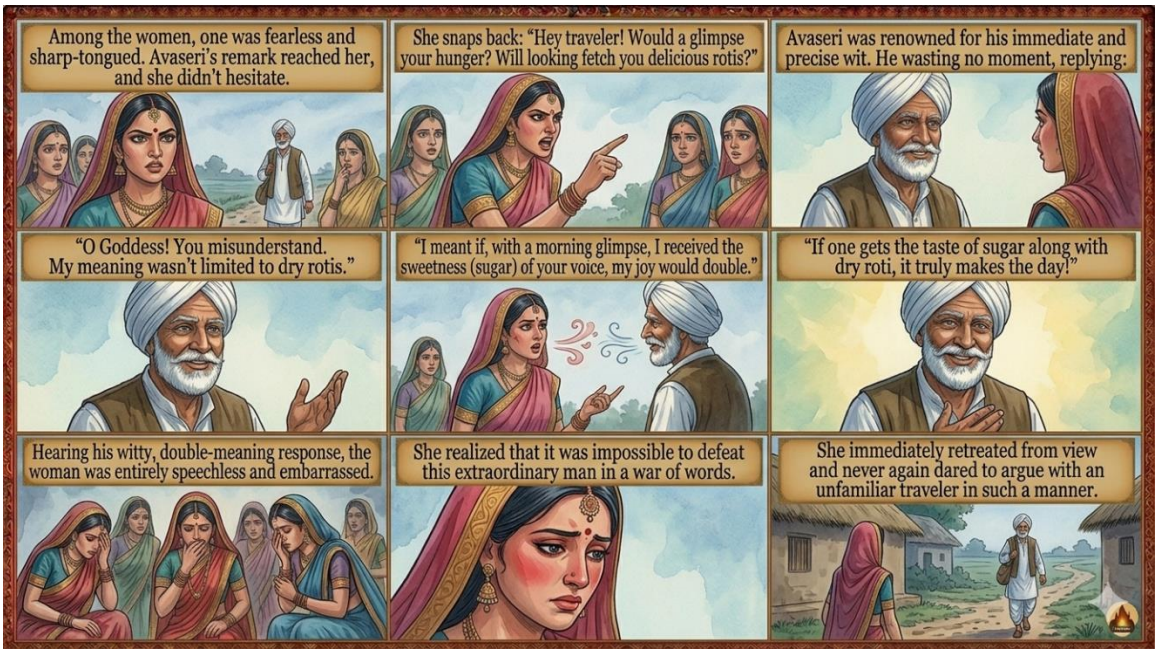
Among the women sitting by the roadside, there was one who was exceptionally fearless and sharp-tongued. When Avaseri's sarcastic remark reached her ears, she did not hesitate for a second. To remind Avaseri of his manners, she snapped back in a sharp tone:

"Hey traveler on the path! Even if you did catch a glimpse of someone along the way, would that appease your hunger? Will merely looking at a beautiful face fetch you delicious rotis? Instead of talking nonsense, why don't you just walk straight on your path?"

But Avaseri was renowned throughout the region for his *pratyutpannamati*—the art of immediate and precise wit. Without wasting a single moment, he replied in a calm yet cleverly dramatic tone:

"O Goddess! You have completely misunderstood me. My meaning wasn't limited to dry rotis. I was merely saying that if, along with a morning glimpse, I also received the sweetness (sugar) of your melodious voice, the joy of this difficult and long journey would double. If one gets the taste of sugar along with dry roti, it truly makes the day!"

Hearing Avaseri's unexpected, witty, and double-meaning response, the woman was left entirely speechless. She realized that it was impossible to defeat this extraordinary man in a war of words. Completely embarrassed, she immediately retreated from view and never again dared to argue with an unfamiliar traveler in such a manner.



This anecdote is a living testament to the fact that Avaseri was not just a simple-natured man, but also possessed an amazing ability to shatter the opponent's ego in a matter of moments using his clever vocabulary, even in awkward and embarrassing situations.

12. The Mystery of the Earthen Pot

Once, over a domestic dispute, Avaseri had a fierce argument with his wife. Out of sheer resentment and immense anger, his wife left for her parents' home. Confounded by her departure and vexed by his sudden loneliness, Avaseri decided to divert his mind. In accordance with the social norms of that era, he headed toward the residence of a famous courtesan (dancer) of the region.

In those days, artists and courtesans resided in the hamlets surrounding Sahajazpur, where connoisseurs of pleasure from nearby villages would go for entertainment.

When Avaseri reached the courtesan—whose name was Tejania—he placed a few coins before her according to his financial capacity. Since money held great value in those times, Avaseri thought the amount was sufficient. However, Tejania was not satisfied with those limited coins. Looking at Avaseri’s rural background, she mocked him:

"Oh, good man! Nothing is going to happen with these few coins. You are a villager; surely you have no scarcity of livestock like cows and buffaloes? There must be plenty of milk and ghee at your home!"

Avaseri immediately agreed and said, "Yes, there is absolutely no shortage of milk and ghee."

Tejania then laid down her condition: "Alright then, if you bring me a small earthen pot (*matki*) full of pure desi ghee, only then can the pleasure of the gathering be enjoyed."

Upon hearing this, Avaseri rushed back to his village to arrange for the ghee. By nature, he was extremely clever and possessed a sharp wit.

Reaching home, he took a beautiful earthen pot. He filled the bottom and middle sections of the pot with solid, clean mud, and right on top of it, he poured about a quarter-kilogram of pure buffalo ghee. From the top, the pot looked completely full and pristine, brimming with pure ghee.

Since it was the winter season, the ghee froze solidly at the mouth of the pot. Because it was pure ghee boiled over a household hearth, its rich aroma began to waft all around.

Carrying the pot, Avaseri returned to Tejania and said proudly, "Look here, I have brought pure ghee, as heavenly as ambrosia, just as you wished. Its very aroma is proof of its purity."

Tejania was delighted to see the pot and smell its fragrance. She said, "Wow! The ghee indeed seems to be of premium quality. Do one thing, take it inside and hand it over to my sister, Dvijania."

Avaseri kept the pot inside and returned to enjoy the gathering with Tejania. Meanwhile, sitting inside, Dvijania could not resist the rich, appetizing aroma of the ghee. Out of curiosity, she opened the lid of the pot and began to taste it. But as soon as she dug slightly below the frozen top layer, she saw nothing but dry mud underneath.

Realizing she had been deceived, she shrieked from inside:

"Oh Tejania! Come quickly and wrap everything up! We have been terribly cheated. This pot is filled only with mud! A thin layer of ghee was placed on top just for show!"

Hearing her sister's words, Tejania was stunned. Holding her head in distress, she lamented:

"Oh goodness! What is the use of wrapping everything up now? The game that was meant to happen is already over. The gathering has concluded, and our guest has already shown his clever artistry!"

By then, leveraging his extraordinary wit, Avaseri had accomplished his purpose and departed from there with a smile, leaving the courtesans—who prided themselves on their shrewdness—empty-handed and full of regret.

This anecdote proves that Avaseri possessed total mastery in confusing anyone with his clever ploys. Without suffering any financial loss, he fulfilled his immediate desire and gave a fitting reply to the other person's greed with his quick-wittedness.

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